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Commentaries on Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith

The collection of Forty Hadith by al-Imam al-Nawawi (or Imam Nawawi) has been known, accepted and appreciated by Muslim scholars for the last seven centuries.

Its significance lay in the fact that these selected forty hadiths comprise the main essential and fundamental concepts of Islam which, in turn, construct the minimum level of required revealed knowledge for every single Muslim. Since having good knowledge of the various fundamental aspects of the religion is key to a Muslim's practice and application of Islam, this web site attempts to provide simple and practical commentaries to the collection of Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith.

Various principles are contained in these hadiths, such as belief, Muslim ethics and *fiqh*. As such, it is very important to have a good understanding of these hadiths based on scholarly interpretations. In addition, these commentaries also try to offer discussions on related contemporary issues pertaining to certain concepts mentioned in these hadiths.

1. Actions are judged by intentions

عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبِي حَفْصِ عُمَرَ ابْنِ الْخَطَّابِ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ
مَنْوَى فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهِيَ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ
يَنْكِحُهَا فَهِيَ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ. رَوَاهُ إِمَامَا الْمُحَدِّثِينَ
أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةَ ابْنِ
بَرْدِزْبَةَ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَأَبُو الْحُسَيْنِ مُسْلِمُ بْنُ الْحَجَّاجِ بْنِ
مُسْلِمِ الْقُشَيْرِيِّ النَّيْسَابُورِيِّ فِي صَحِيحَيْهِمَا اللَّذَيْنِ هُمَا
أَصْحَحُ الْكُتُبِ الْمُصَنَّفَةِ.

It is narrated on the authority of Amirul Mu'minin, Abu Hafs 'Umar bin al-Khattab, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

"Actions are (judged) by motives (*niyyah*), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration (*hijrah*) was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

background

This *hadith* was said by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, at the time when a man emigrated from Makkah to Madinah during the Hijrah for the sake of marrying someone and not for the sake of Islam.

It is considered to be one of the greatest *hadiths* in Islam.

Al-Imam al-Shafie said: This Hadith is one third of the knowledge of Islam; related to about 70 topics of Fiqh.

Al-Imam Ahmad (with reference to al-Imam al-Shafie's statement) said: Islam is based on three fundamentals (all are among the 40 *hadiths*):

- i. Hadith 1: which is stated above.

- ii. Hadith 5: "Whosoever introduces into this affair of ours (i.e. Islam) something that does not belong to it, it is to be rejected."
- iii. Hadith 6: "Truly, what is lawful is evident, and what is unlawful is evident, and in between the two are matters which are doubtful which many people do not know....."

These three *hadiths* are agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

These *hadiths* can be seen as three criteria to help Muslims evaluate and judge what they do and say "as an *ibadah*" in their daily life:

- i. Hadith 1 - To evaluate and judge our internal actions (actions of the heart).
- ii. Hadith 5 - To evaluate and judge our external actions (actions of the limbs).
- iii. Hadith 6 - To evaluate and judge our dealings "*mu'amalat*" (interaction between people).



Niyyah (intention) has two meanings:

- i. The intention before an *ibadah* (e.g. prayer)
- ii. The willingness

The second meaning (ii.) is what is meant in this *hadith*.

lessons

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, starts the *hadith* with the principle ("Actions are judged by intentions") and then gives three examples. This is the methodology of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. The examples help illustrate the principle so that it is easier for people to understand and they can apply the principle to other similar situations.

The three examples consist of one of good intention (migration for the sake of Allah and His Messenger) and two of bad intentions (migration for the sake of worldly gains or for marriage).



This *hadith* emphasises ***ikhlas*** (sincerity - to be truthful and honest to Allah alone, performing an act solely for Allah's sake whereby no other witness except Allah is sought). *Ikhlas* is one of the conditions of accepting good deeds. The other condition is that the actions must be done in accordance with the Shariah as it will be explained in the fifth *hadith*.

This can be seen in the *shahadah* :

- "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah" is the *ikhlas* - ensuring that we do things for the sake of Allah and Allah alone.
- "I bear witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah" - the Sunnah is the manifestation of the Quran - the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is our example, our best model to follow. Following his Sunnah in our *ibadah*, *Akhlaq* (ethics), and *Muamalat* (dealings) ensures that we are acting in accordance with the Shariah.

Thus, the *shahadah* shows us the conditions for accepting a deed or performing an action: (a) it should be for the sake of Allah because He is the only One we worship, and (b) it should be in accordance with the Shariah.



To achieve *ikhlas*, we have to avoid *shirk* (associating others with Allah, which causes insincerity). Al-Imam al-Harawi said the root cause for insincerity (or *shirk*) is self-desire (*al-hawa*). Therefore no action should be done because of self-desire.

Imam al-Harawi states that there are 7 types of self-desires:-

- i. To make oneself appear good in the hearts of others
- ii. To seek the praises of others
- iii. To avoid being blamed by others
- iv. To seek the glorification of others
- v. To seek the wealth/money of others
- vi. To seek the services or love of others
- vii. To seek the help of others for oneself



Ways to obtain *ikhlas*:

- Do righteous deeds - the more good deeds we do and hence get closer to Allah, the more sincere we will be.
- Before we do any deed we should firstly seek knowledge (*ilm*) - our actions/deeds should be guided by knowledge so that we do them in accordance to the Shariah.
- Do not give false impressions - do not make others believe that an action we did was good when it was not.
- Al-Imam Ahmad said: Before you do anything, check your intention (*niyyah*) - ask yourself before performing an action: "Is it for the sake of Allah?"



Ibnu al-Qayyim says: Any action we do is subject to three defects:

- i. Being conscious that others are observing our actions
- ii. Seeking a return (benefit/reward) for the action
- iii. Being satisfied with the action

Examples:

- If we go to the *masjid* for the *salah* and we are early, arriving before the Imam and finding a place in the first *saff*, we should not be proud of ourselves and think of ourselves being better than others. We should praise Allah for enabling us to go to the *masjid* and for being able to perform the *salah* without any difficulties.
- After every *salah*, we should tell ourselves that we could have performed it better and try to improve in our next *salah*.



What happens if we were to change our *niyyah* while performing an action? Ibn Rajab says according to the *ulama'* if the *niyyah* at the end of the action matches the beginning (i.e. doing the action for the sake of Allah), then any changes in the middle of the action will be forgiven or does not matter, insha Allah. However, if the *niyyah* at the end does not match the beginning, i.e. we do the action for other than the sake of Allah, then we must repent (*taubah*).



There are four things that contradict *ikhlas*:

- i. *Ma'siat* - committing sins - this will weaken our *ikhlas*
- ii. *Shirk* - associating others with Allah

- iii. *Riya'* - performing an *ibadah* with the intention of showing off to others
- iv. *Nifaq* - hypocrisy

Even though we must always make sure that our actions do not deviate from *ikhlas*, there are actions, which are automatically considered that of good intentions. For example, seeking knowledge in Islam, helping the community, doing *da'wah*, etc.



Some rulings (*ahkam*) which scholars derived from this *hadith*:

- When people 'swear by Allah' by saying "Wallahi" every now and then, their intention is not that they actually swear by Allah. They say it simply out of habit - it readily rolls off their tongue. Hence, it is harmless. However a Muslim should do his/her best to minimize it.
- When someone is asked to give an oath, what is judged is his intention when he gives the oath.
- There can be a combination of intentions between performing an *ibadah* and teaching others - we perform an *ibadah* for the sake of Allah, but we also do it with the intention of teaching others. e.g. when the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, performed the Hajj, he did it for the sake of Allah as well as for teaching the Sahabah (his companions, may Allah be pleased with them all).
- A man may go through the process of divorcing his wife, verbally or in court, but it is his intention which counts.
- What could be seen as *ghibah* (backbiting - talking bad, but true, things about a person behind his back) could simply be a joke or a *dua*. If someone talks bad about someone else, it is his intentions, which determines whether it is *ghibah* or not.

conclusion

Our actions are undermined by our intentions - whether they are good intentions or bad intentions. Therefore we should always check our intentions before we do or say anything. We must make sure that the action is for the sake of Allah so that it is accepted by Allah and that we will be rewarded for it, *insha Allah*.

2. Islam, Iman, Ihsan, Qadar

عَنْ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَيْضًا قَالَ : بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ جُلُوسٌ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعْرِ لَا يَرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرَ السَّفَرِ وَلَا يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخْذَيْهِ وَقَالَ : يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ، وَتَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ ، وَتُحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا . قَالَ : صَدَقْتَ فَعَجِبْنَا لَهُ يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ . قَالَ : فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ ، قَالَ : أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ . قَالَ : صَدَقْتَ قَالَ : فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ ، قَالَ : أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ . قَالَ : فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ، قَالَ : مَا الْمَسْئُورُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ . قَالَ : فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَمَارَاتِهَا ، قَالَ : أَنْ تَلِدَ الْأُمَّةُ رَبَّتَهَا وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحَفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءَ الشَّاءِ يَتَطَاوَلُونَ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ فَلَبِثْتُ مَلِيًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ : يَا عُمَرُ أَتَدْرِي مِنَ السَّائِلِ؟ قُلْتُ : اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ . قَالَ : فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ .

Also on the authority of 'Umar, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said:

"While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him.

He sat down close by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, rested his knee against his thighs, and said, O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam." Said the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, "Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity save Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform *salah* (ritual prayer), pay the *zakah*, fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it)." Said he (the man), "You have spoken truly."

We were astonished at his thus questioning him and telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, "Inform me about iman (faith)." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate (*qadar*), both in its good and in its evil aspects." He said, "You have spoken truly."

Then he (the man) said, "Inform me about Ihsan." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet He sees you." He said, "Inform me about the Hour." He (the Messenger of Allah) said, "About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner." So he said, "Well, inform me about the signs thereof (i.e. of its coming)." Said he, "They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings." Thereupon the man went off.

I waited a while, and then he (the Messenger of Allah) said, "O 'Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion."

[Muslim]

background

Al-Imam Muslim says: Towards the end of his life, Abdullah bin 'Umar (the son of 'Umar bin al-Khattab) was told by two people that a new Islamic sect had emerged from Iraq. They were called Al-Qadariyah and they denied *al-qadar* (fate). Thus Abdullah bin 'Umar narrated this *hadith* which mentions *qadar* as one of the pillars of Iman to refute the misconception of this sect.

lessons

This *hadith* teaches the *adab* (ethics) of seeking knowledge:

- We should be clean and wear clean clothes.
- We should sit properly and closer to the speaker.
- Asking questions for better understanding.
- Seek knowledge from the right source/authority.

The method of seeking knowledge is through asking questions:

- The type of questions we ask should be meaningful - questions that will lead to valuable knowledge and good action.

- Asking good questions will result in better learning as well as teaching. Those who are present when the questions are asked will also learn from the answers - thus, the questioner is teaching the others.
- When Ibn Abbas, one of the greatest Scholars among the Sahabahs, was asked how he obtained all his knowledge, he replied: "with an inquisitive tongue (i.e. he always asked questions) and a contemplating heart".
- In many *hadiths* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, himself will start by asking questions before he imparts with knowledge. Asking questions will prepare the mind/heart so that it will be ready for the answers/knowledge - ready to absorb and learn. In this hadith he calls Jibril "the questioner" which implies full appreciation and encouragement of asking questions specially the ones that will lead to gaining more knowledge.
- In the Quran itself there are more than 1,200 questions - to serve different purposes - to provoke the mind of the reader and force it to indulge in thinking about what he/she reads.



Scholars say that qadar can be seen at two levels:

- i. We believe that Allah knew, with His ultimate knowledge, what all His creations will do, even before the creations took place. Allah recorded all this knowledge in Al-Lauhulmahfudz - the preserved tablet.
- ii. We believe that it is the will of Allah that these things will take place, whether they are good or bad.

Allah created our willingness and our ability of doing things - we can only do something if we are willing and able to do it. However, we are responsible for the choices we make.



Misconceptions about Qadar

Many Muslims believe that what they are going to do is **caused** by what has already been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz - they confuse 'causation' with 'association'. In truth what we have is association, not causation. What we do is not caused by what is written by Allah. Allah with His ultimate knowledge knew what we are going to do. He could easily have put the good-doers into Jannah and the evil-doers into the Hellfire. But Allah is Adil (Just) so He created us in this life as to test us which way to go. What we are going to do will match what has already been written but it's not a matter of causation - what we do is out of our own willingness and ability and we do have full responsibility on whatever choice we make.

Looking at guidance and misguidance, guidance (*hidayah*) is a gift (*rahmah*) from Allah. It is Allah who created us and gave us the mind so we can distinguish between right and wrong to a certain capacity. It is Allah who equipped us with **fitrah** to like the truth and good and to dislike the wrong and evil. It is Allah who gave us the ability and power to do things and it is Allah who sent the Messenger with the Message to guide us in things, which are beyond the reach of our conception. So when it comes to guidance it is a bounty from Allah.

But when it comes to misguidance, it has to do with us. When we do bad deeds, it is from our own willingness and ability.

Those who turn away from guidance do so because they want to turn away, i.e. they choose not to be guided. They have been misguided because they are arrogant - they refuse to listen.

And so when they swerved from the right way, Allah let their hearts swerve from the truth. [Surah As-Saff (61): ayat 5]

Nevertheless there are people who have not received the Message of Islam/guidance at all or the Message has not reached them in the clearest form, i.e. it is incomplete or distorted. These people are called Ahlul Fatrah and will be excused and not be punished, even though there are misguided.



There are certain situations where we can do something about our *qadar*. For example:

- Illness/sickness is *qadar* - but we have been commanded by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to look for a cure should we become ill. Finding a cure is also *qadar*. Thus, a *qadar* could be dealt with through another *qadar*.
- If something unfortunate happens to us, e.g. if we lost our job, we don't just say that it's *qadar* and do nothing about it. We look for another job, the consequence of which is another *qadar*.

'Umar bin al-Khattab was traveling with a group of Sahabahs during his Khilafah (leadership). They were coming to a town when they heard that it had a contagious/infectious disease, i.e. cholera. 'Umar asked his group whether they should proceed or go back (to Madinah). The majority of the Sahabahs said they should go back but some said they should proceed. Then one Sahabi said he knew a *hadith* where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "If you hear that this disease exists in a country, don't travel to that country." So 'Umar decided that they should go back. Another Sahabi (it seems from the second group) asked him whether he was running away from a *qadar*. 'Umar replied that they were moving away from one *qadar* to another *qadar*.

Thus, whenever there is a problem, a challenge or any hardship which we can remove, overcome, solve or minimize, it is a must that we do so. Some scholars like al-Imam al-Jilani use the term: "overcoming *qadar*" in this regard.

In one *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Be keen for whatever is beneficial for you. Seek the help of Allah. And don't be reckless." This *hadith* implies we must make the effort. **The right concept of *qadar* is: we are responsible for whatever we do.**

For example: If we were to drive recklessly and caused an accident where someone died or was injured, we cannot simply say that it is *qadar*, abusing the concept to justify our mistakes. It is *qadar* that the incident took place because it is by the permission of Allah. But we are responsible for the death because it is through our willingness and ability that it happened. That's why in the courts we will be found guilty. If *qadar* can be used as an excuse, then many crimes will go unpunished - a thief can simply claim that his stealing was *qadar*!



Those who abuse the concept of *qadar* are those who fail to be responsible. They abuse it to justify their failure. The correct way of using *qadar* as an excuse is: if someone exerts himself to do his best to fulfil an obligation but due to an unavoidable circumstance, which was out of his control, he could not achieve that obligation - then he might be excused. For example, a student has studied hard for an exam but on the day of the exam he falls sick and does poorly or cannot even attend the exam, then he can say that it is *qadar* and that it is the will of Allah.

When it comes to religious obligations, the matter is the same. We cannot blame *qadar* for committing sins or failing to do a *wajib* as some Muslims might do. We have to know that we are responsible. We might get into a weak status of Iman in doing a sin or delaying a *wajib*. Islam is such a practical religion that it gives us room for repentance and getting back to the right path.



In the above *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, defines Al-Islam, i.e. the five pillars, as the outward actions of the limbs, Al-Iman as being associated with belief - the inner actions of the heart, and Al-Ihsan as the highest level to attain. But the first two definitions can be interchanged with each other - sometimes Islam can be used to describe internal actions and Iman can mean external actions. There are a few *hadiths* which The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions that there are more than seventy actions which are considered as Iman.

If the term Islam is used on its own, it means the whole thing - Al-Islam, Al-Iman and Al-Ihsan. Similarly, when Iman is used on its own it means Al-Iman, Al-Islam and Al-Ihsan. The Prophet,

sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, mentions at the end of this *hadith* that the *deen* consists of these three things.



If the Iman is weak it will affect Al-Islam (good deeds/actions). According to al-Imam Abu Hanifa: Even though Al-Iman and Al-Islam are different, Al-Iman necessitates the actions (Al-Islam).

Some Scholars say the Muslims are considered strangers among the Disbelievers; and the Mua'minin are considered strangers among the Muslims; and the Muhsinin are considered strangers among the Mua'minin.



Al-Ihsan (the highest level of Iman where we worship Allah as if we see Him or if we don't see Him we know He sees us) is about fearing Allah and glorifying Him. This will lead us to strive for our best in performing our *ibadah* - we will be more sincere in our *ibadah*. Thus Al-Ihsan is also about the best actions of the heart. The actions that will lead to Al-Ihsan: to love Allah the most, to fear Allah the most, to seek the help of Allah, to have hope in Allah that He will give us mercy and guide us, to trust Allah wholly.



When Jibril, *aliyyhi as-Salam*, asks the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, about the Hour (the Day of Judgement), the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, replies that neither he nor Jibril knows the answer. This is an example set by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, where even someone with vast knowledge like himself does not know everything and admits so.

Al-Imam Malik was asked forty questions by someone and to most of them he answered "I don't know - Allah knows better". The man was surprised that the great Imam Malik didn't know the answers. Seeing the man surprised, Imam Malik told him that when he goes back to his town, to tell the people that he met and asked al-Imam Malik questions and Imam Malik said he didn't know the answers. Al-Imam Malik didn't want to be accountable for giving wrong answers. Thus, if we are to become an educator or a scholar, we should have the courage to admit what we do not know. We should not give an answer which may contain incorrect information.



The signs of Akhirah mentioned in this *hadith* are minor signs, as opposed to major ones. We believe in these signs but we should not worry about them too much - we should not worry about when these signs will occur. We should actually be careful as some of these signs are bad deeds and we must steer away from these bad deeds.

conclusion

This *hadith* contains everything about Islam: the five pillars of Islam, the beliefs that make up Iman (including the belief of fate or *qadar*), the attainment of the highest level of Iman which is Ihsan, the *adab* of seeking knowledge and of teaching.

3. Islam, Iman, Ihsan, Qadar

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ
الزَّكَاةِ وَحَجِّ الْبَيْتِ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ. رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ
وَمُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khattab, *radiyallahu 'anhuma*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

"Islam has been built upon five things - on testifying that there is no god save Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger; on performing *salah*; on giving the *zakah*; on Hajj to the House; and on fasting during Ramadhan."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

background

This *hadith* is part of the previous Hadith (2). Most Scholars say that the reason why al-Imam al-Nawawi included this *hadith* in his collection, even though it seems that it repeats some portions of Hadith 2, is because of the importance of the 5 pillars of Islam.

This Hadith stresses the fundamental aspects of the outward submission to Allah. This submission is based on some pillars, similar to a structure. If a person fulfills these aspects, he has laid a solid foundation for his *deen* as a 'home'.

The other acts of Islam, which are not mentioned in this *hadith*, can be taken as fine touches to complete this structure.

If a person fails to fulfill these obligations (building the pillars), then the entire structure of his *deen/iman* may be threatened. This depends on how much is being violated - e.g. violation of the *shahadah* is the most dangerous.

lessons

The use of metaphors and similes

This *hadith* uses a metaphor (i.e. the image of the structure of a building) to affirm certain important meanings. This use of metaphors and similes can be found in many Surahs in the Quran and in many other *hadiths*. For example:

- In Surah At-Taubah (9): ayat 109, a similar metaphor is used - the structure of the Mua'min's deen/iman is based on a sound foundation, whereas the structure of the deen of the Munafiq is based on weak ground which may lead to the collapse of the structure, resulting in the Munafik entering the Hellfire.
- Surah An-Nur (24): ayat 35, uses the metaphor of light as the light of guidance in the heart of the Mua'min.
- A metaphor used to condemn those who fail to fulfill the *amanah* (i.e. religious obligations) can be found in Surah Al-Jumu'ah (62): ayat 5. The Bani Israel, having failed to obey Allah's commandments in the Taurah, are described as a donkey which is burdened with heavy books on its back but doesn't understand anything from them. Scholars have said that this metaphor also applies to other nations, which fail to fulfill their *amanah*.
- In one *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, divided the status of his *ummah* into three categories: those who benefit from the Message, those who benefit partially and those who fail to benefit at all. He, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used the metaphor of rain (as the Message) falling down on different types of land, producing different results.

Using metaphors to convey the Message is a very important 'tool' and it is the methodology used in the Quran and by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. There are many modes of expression used in the Quran and Hadith and they are used for different purposes. E.g. Dealing with the misconceptions and false assumptions of the disbelievers, the Quran and Hadith use rational thinking. When describing Jannah and the Hellfire, the style used by the Quran and Hadith is the visual mode of expression - they are described in such detail that it is like we can actually visualize Jannah or the Hellfire in front of us.

One of the Sahabahs said that he had already seen Jannah and the Hellfire. The other Sahabahs were puzzled and asked him how this could be so as nobody is able to see them until the Hereafter. He replied, "I saw them through the eyes of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. If I were to be given the chance to see Jannah and the Hellfire with my own eyes, I would not trust my sight. I trust the eyes of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, more than I trust my own eyes." Here we can conclude that if we read and understand the Quran and the Hadiths we too can visualize the paradise and the Hellfire.

These modes of expression (thinking styles) used by the Quran and Hadith should be well understood and used by Muslims today to convey the Message of Islam when doing *da'wah* as it is the most effective way. Different styles should be used to reach/convince different people - some people are more emotional, some are more rational, etc.



First Pillar : The Shahadah

The first part of the Shahadah is testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. There are seven conditions of the Shahadah:

- Knowledge - to understand what it means
- Certainty - to have no doubt about anything confirmed in the Quran or Sunnah
- Acceptance - by the tongue and the heart of whatever the Shahadah implies
- Submission/compliance - the actual physical enactment by deeds
- Truthfulness - to say the Shahadah sincerely, with honesty, to actually mean it
- Sincerity - to do it solely for the sake of Allah
- Love - to love the Shahadah and to love its implications and requirements and what it stands for

The Shahadah is not simply saying it with our tongue. We need to adhere to these conditions. If we say the Shahadah sincerely and with honesty, we will not do anything which contradicts with or violates the Shahadah.

The second part of the Shahadah carries the following conditions:

- To believe in the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and in whatever he told us and conveyed to us
- To obey him in whatever he commanded us to do
- To stay away from or avoid whatever he commanded us not to do
- To follow or emulate him in our *ibadah*, *akhlaq* and way of life
- To love him more than we love ourselves, our family and anything else in this world
- To understand, practice and promote his Sunnah in the best way possible, without creating any chaos, enmity or harm



Second Pillar : Establishing the Prayers (Salah)

Some interpretations of this *hadith* translate "*iqamatus salah*" as 'performing' the salah. "*iqamatus salah*" is a broader concept than what the term 'performing' means. The Scholars say "*iqamatus salah*" implies:

- Doing the *wudu* in the proper way
- To do the salah in its time
- To do it in congregation (*jama'ah*) - where the reward is 27 times than praying alone
- To fulfill the six conditions of *salah*
- To observe the proper manners (*adab*) of doing it such as submission and humility
- To follow preferable actions (*sunnan*) in our *salah*

It is important that we follow these conditions and not violate them if we want to truly fulfill the second pillar of Islam i.e. "*iqamatus salah*". We should remember that Allah initially commanded us to pray fifty times a day and it was eventually reduced to five times (with the reward of fifty) - the prayer times are very reasonably spread out throughout the day - it can even help us to manage our time - it can help us to manage our affairs, allowing the Muslim community to meet during congregation and care for and help each other which will lead in turn to solidarity. Thus, the prayers should not be seen as a burden as some Muslims might regard them today.



Third Pillar : Zakat

The giving of Zakat has been pointed out by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, for certain things and in certain ways or percentages and under certain conditions. The Scholars say that knowing the details of Zakat only becomes an obligation when a person owns the type of property or thing which requires him to give Zakat for. E.g. Farmers or traders or property owners need to know the conditions and percentages of Zakat that they are obligated to give.



Fourth Pillar : Hajj

Pilgrimage (Hajj) to the House (Kaabah) is an obligation that we need to do only once in our lifetime - only if we meet certain conditions, e.g. if we have the financial means, a way of travelling peacefully, etc. If we meet these conditions then we should perform the Hajj as soon as possible and not to delay it.

Some Scholars say that if we have the means to perform the Hajj several times, then it is better to use this money to help others to fulfill their obligations - we will be rewarded for their pilgrimage or to use the money for the betterment of the community.

For each of these Pillars there are conditions, *sunnah*, ethics (*adab*), etc., which should be observed when we perform these *ibadahs*. Why do we always hear that every year hundreds of Muslims lose their lives or get injured during Hajj? Most of these incidents are due to the negligence of the *adab* or violation of the *sunnah*. For example, the throwing of stones at the Jamrat:

- Even though we are supposed to use small stones, people tend to use big ones and throw recklessly from a far distance, causing injuries to others.
- People do not follow the specified directions when they move, causing many to get crushed by the 'human waves' moving in different directions.
- People insist on going to throw at the peak times, i.e. the busiest part of the day. The elderly, women and handicapped should be reminded to go when it is less crowded.

Thus, it is important that we observe the *adab*.



Fifth Pillar : Fasting

Ramadhan is a training program for all Muslims to go through, performing good deeds to become better Muslims. However, we should continue with these good deeds outside of Ramadhan - praying in the mosque, Tahajjud, Qiamu alil, reciting the Qur'an, helping and caring for others etc.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, when asked what the best way is to finish reading the whole Qur'an, said to do it in one month, i.e. one Juzuk per day. This is something we should practice all the time and not have to wait for Ramadhan to do it. If we cannot achieve this, at least try to read one or two pages a day (a quarter of a *hizb*).

Similarly we should try to do the night prayers (*tahajjud*), be it only two raka'at and not everyday, outside of Ramadhan.

We should not make personal commitments in performing these preferable actions where the Shariah has not made this itself. This might lead us to giving up on our commitment and hence, the good deed. The best way is to do it on ease and convenience aiming at the continuity of these good deeds.

conclusion

All the Pillars of Islam have rulings, conditions and mannerisms (*ahkam wa adab*) applied to them. It is important that we know these *ahkam* and *adab* and regularly remind ourselves, especially before Ramadan or before performing the Hajj, so that we perform the Pillars properly and according to the Shariah.

4. Creation of human being; Al-Qadar

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ الصَّادِقُ الْمَصْدُوقُ. إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ خَلْقُهُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا نُطْفَةً ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عَلَقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يُرْسَلُ إِلَيْهِ الْمَلَكُ فَيَنْفُخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحَ وَيُؤَمِّرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ يَكْتُبُ رِزْقَهُ وَأَجَلَهُ وَعَمَلَهُ وَشَقِيًّا أَوْ سَعِيدًا فَوَاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُهُ إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ إِلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا وَإِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ .

Abu 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported: The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, the most truthful, the most trusted, told us:

"Verily the creation of any one of you takes place when he is assembled in his mother's womb; for forty days he is as a drop of fluid, then it becomes a clot for a similar period. Thereafter, it is a lump looking like it has been chewed for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him, who breathes the *ruh* (spirit) into him. This Angel is commanded to write Four decrees: that he writes down his provision (*rizq*), his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be among the wretched or the blessed.

I swear by Allah - there is no God but He - one of you may perform the deeds of the people of Paradise till there is naught but an arm's length between him and it, when that which has been written will outstrip him so that he performs the deeds of the people of the Hell Fire; one of you may perform the deeds of the people of the Hell Fire, till there is naught but an arm's length between him and it, when that which has been written will overtake him so that he performs the deeds of the people of Paradise and enters therein."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

background

This *hadith* was not only recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim but by other Scholars as well. Apart from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, this *hadith* was also narrated by many other companions (Sahabahs).

This narration by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was recorded with different versions where some words/terms conflicted with each other, resulting in different versions having different meanings regarding Creation. The conflicts are as follows:

1. The addition of the word "*nutfah*" (the drop of a fluid)

This word is not mentioned in Bukhari neither Muslim's narration. However it was added to other narrations including the one chosen by al-Imam al-Nawawi to provide a better interpretation or explanation but instead it gave two conflicting views of the creation of mankind in terms of stages of the fetus:

First

View:

The three stages of the fetus consist of forty days each, equaling to a total of 120 days for the stages to complete. It is only after this 120 days that the *ruh* (spirit) is breathed into the fetus, as well as the recording of the fetus' provision life span, deeds and destiny. This view, the inclusion of the word "*nutfah*", is the view held by the majority of the Scholars.

One problem with this view is that the stages of the fetus as interpreted in this *hadith* contradict the facts proven by science today.

Another problem concerns the Fatwa on abortion. Scholars say that abortion is allowed (provided there is a very good reason - e.g. the woman's life is in danger) only before the *ruh* is breathed into the fetus, i.e. before 120 days - as opposed to 40 days if the second view is to be taken (see below).

Second

View:

The word "*nutfah*" does not belong to the text of the *hadith*. This changes the meaning of the *hadith* which interprets the three stages of the fetus as taking place in the first forty days. This view correlates with scientific facts. And this means that the *ruh* is breathed into the fetus after forty days, and not 120 days. Consequently the Fatwa on abortion states that abortion is allowed only before forty days.

2. The authenticity of the last section of the Hadith

Some Scholars say that the last section of the *hadith* (i.e. "By Allah...") is not part of the text of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, but the words of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud. But since the issue in this *hadith* is related to matters which we cannot perceive with our limited human perception, this last section is accepted and included here because 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud may have derived the meaning from another *hadith* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to explain this *hadith* better.

There are other *hadiths* collected by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, which touch on the same issue. But there are some differences between the texts of those *hadiths* and this one. Those *hadiths* narrate the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, as saying: One of you will perform the acts of the people of the Paradise (Ahlul Jannah) **as it appears in the eyes of the people.**

This is like the Munafiqin or hypocrites - they do the acts of the Mua'minin. They appear, in our eyes, to be doing the acts of the Ahlul Jannah but Allah knows best. Their end will be a disaster - by being Munafiqin they are actually denying the message of God in their deep hearts as Allah mentioned in the Qur'an and their end will be in the Hellfire since they do not submit to Allah in their hearts. This explanation of the other *hadiths* is important in the understanding of this *hadith*.

lessons

The Scholars say when we do a research on a concept or an issue mentioned in *hadiths*, we shouldn't depend on only one *hadith* - we need to search for other similar *hadiths*, which deal with the same issue/matter. We must remember that some narrators will narrate a *hadith* by its meaning, and not exactly as it was said by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. This is because being human, some of them may forget some of the exact words/terms used by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - but they still understand the actual meaning of what was said.

Then we need to compare the different texts of *hadiths* on the same issue with each other in order to have a more complete interpretation and better understanding of the issue/matter at hand.



Some people, on hearing this *hadith* as it is and without further explanation, might feel despair, fearing that they fall into the bad group of people mentioned. This will lead to determination (*jabriah*) - they may think that no matter what they do, if their end has already been written, then why should they bother to do good deeds. This is the wrong attitude to have as it is based on a wrong perception. Allah is Just. We should trust Allah. If we are good to Allah and trust Him, He will be good to us. We should be optimistic and not pessimistic. We follow Allah's commands and make the effort to be good Muslims and we should not despair.

During one of the battles, a companion (Sahabi) said to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, that he was following him, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to fight in the hope that an arrow will be shot through his (the Sahabi's) neck, coming in from the front and going out the back. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "If you are honest with Allah, Allah will be honest with you." The Sahabi died exactly as he hoped to.

The Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, words here are generic and can be used for all situations. If we are honest with Allah, Allah will not leave us - He will help us - He will guide us, etc. The closer we are to Allah, the more He will help us and guide us. Thus, the last section of this *hadith* is an exception and applies only to few people such as the Munafiqin.



But this, on the other hand, does not mean that we live in hope alone. The Scholars say that we must combine hope with fear - when we worship Allah, we should have hope as well as fear of Him. Fearing Allah is a positive thing. The more we fear Allah, the closer we get to Him. The more we fear Allah, the more calm and at peace we will be. This is unlike the natural 'fear' where if we fear something, e.g. a fire or a dangerous animal, we will try to get away from it.

Scholars say that we should have an equal amount of hope to the amount of fear. This is so we will have a better status of Iman (faith) - there is no despair and at the same time there is no excessive hope (over-confidence) which could lead to laziness and the non-fulfillment of our obligations. This is why we need to combine hope and fear, as well as love Allah the most and have trust in Him.



This above *hadith* is about Allah's Creation and Qadar. The statement: "that which has been written will overtake him" should be understood in the positive sense and not negatively. Allah with His ultimate knowledge knows what will happen as it has been explained in the previous *hadith*.

Al-Qadar can be categorized as:

1. Al-Qadar al-Kulli - the general *qadar* which has been recorded by Allah in Al-Lauhulmahfudz or the Preserved Tablet.
2. Al-Qadar al-Sanawi - the annual *qadar* which takes place once a year (Lailatul qadar) - where it matches what has been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz.

What has been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz is only known to Allah. It is not revealed to us - we don't know about our destiny, what our *rizq* is, where we'll end up, etc. To us it is *ghaib* and unknown. The translation of this *hadith* using the word "overtake" may not give the true meaning if it were to be understood that whatever has been recorded by the angels will be "imposed" on a person's life. We are simply being told about Ilmu Allah or the ultimate knowledge of Allah. What has been written does not cause us to do what we do. It is not a cause and affect situation, as believed by many Muslims. Many Muslims believe that as it has already been written, therefore this will cause us to do whatever has been written. The truth is even though it has been written and even though we will do it, we will not do it because it has been written. It is actually an association, or a matching. What we are going to do matches the knowledge of Allah, because Allah's knowledge is ultimate. In other words, what we are going to do matches what has been written. This shows the glory of Allah, the ultimate knowledge of Allah. So we should not have the understanding that things are imposed on us. Otherwise this will nullify the whole concept of *iman* (faith) and the whole concept of Creation and all other related concepts.



We are responsible for what we choose and for what we do. Referring to the last section of this *hadith* where a person's final destiny changes at the last minute and he ends up not as expected, there are examples in the Sirahs where some people embrace Islam in the last minute - e.g. they embrace Islam and go into battle and die, some of them not having done a single good deed. There are also many examples today where non-practicing Muslims or those doing bad deeds, having reached the last stages of their lives (at the age of 50 or 60), will repent and turn into a good Muslim. The same applies for thousands of new converts every year. These people, according to the will of Allah, will be forgiven and enter Paradise.

For the other scenario where a person performs good deeds most of his/her life and at the end of his/her life perform bad deeds deserving to enter the Hellfire (as mentioned in the *hadith*), this situation affects only a limited number of people compared to the first one. And it is because of the person himself, such as in the case of hypocrites.



To have the correct understanding of the concept of *qadar*, we need to know more about the creation of the human being. What is mentioned in this Hadith is actually a miracle. It describes the stages of the fetus and the creation of man 1,400 years before science and technology confirm it as fact. (This description of the stages of the fetus can also be found in the Quran but without the mention of the periods of times.) In other words, scientists were only able to observe this phenomenon in the last few decades whereas it was already mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith hundreds of years ago.

A conference regarding the Creation was held in Europe several years ago and some Muslim Scholars were invited to attend. When these Scholars gave the Islamic perspective regarding the stages of the fetus, showing that this was documented in the Quran and the Hadith, some of the people who attended the conference embraced Islam - they were convinced that it is a Divine revelation.



We also need to understand the components of the human being in order to help us understand *qadar* in the positive way. The human being consists of the following components: -

- The intellect (Al-Aql) - this allows us, to a certain extent, to distinguish between good and evil. The intellect is part of us, part of the creation of Allah. Based on this, a person is regarded as *mukallaf*, responsible to understand and accept the message of Allah if he is sane. If someone is mentally disturbed or insane, then he is not *mukallaf*.
- The natural disposition or innate (Al-Fitrah) - we are created with this innate which enables us to love what is good and what is right and to hate what is evil and what is wrong. It consists of love and hate. Even though we are created with this *fitrah*, it is subject to change due to the environment, to our parents, upbringing, etc. Therefore there are people who might love what is bad due to a spoiled or a corrupted *fitrah*. The Scholars say the original *fitrah* is still there

within these people - if we try to 'awaken' the *fitrah*, these people will come back to loving good and hating bad.

- The commitment that we make, at the time of our pre-creation, to worship only Allah. This is related to the *fitrah* - it causes us to have this natural disposition or innate towards loving what is good and hating what is bad.
- The willingness (Al-Iradah) and Power (Qudrah): Allah provided us with willingness and power/ability. An action cannot take place without this willingness and power - we do something only if we are willing and we have the power to do it. But this willingness and power are neutral and can be manipulated and used in either good or bad ways.
- We have also been created with desires (*shahawat*) and the existence of these desires within us can manipulate our willingness or power towards good or bad.

Desires are part of what is known as the internal challenges - things which influence our willingness and ability. The internal challenges consist of:

- Shahawat/Hawa (self desires)
- Nafs, of which there are three different aspects:
 - i. The *nafs* which encourages us to do bad deeds
 - ii. The *nafs* which blames us for our bad deeds or thoughts of bad deeds (if we have *iman* and knowledge) - e.g. our *nafs* says "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for thinking about drinking alcohol?"
 - iii. The peaceful *nafs* (al-Mutma'inah)

We can be dealing with these three different aspects of the *nafs* in a short period of time, e.g. within less than an hour, where (i) we start in thinking about doing a bad deed, caused by *al-nafsu ammarah bi sua'* which is the first aspect of *nafs*, but due to our faith (ii) the blaming self prevents us from performing that bad deed, leading us to (iii) the aspect of the peaceful self.

There are also external challenges (which attract the internal challenges):

- The existing *muharamat* (prohibitions) - e.g. the first aspect of *nafs* will activate the *hawa* and the *hawa* will push us to think about and do the bad deeds.
- The insinuation/whispering (*waswasa*) of Satan. All that Satan can do is to insinuate. He will try to convince us to do bad deeds by promoting evil and making it appear nice and acceptable to us, or convince us to delay doing good deeds. E.g. if we are good Muslims Satan will try to make us delay performing the prayer or giving the *sadaqah* by making it appear as a bad thing to do because giving *sadaqah* will result in a financial burden for us. As we can see, both cases are done through coloring our perception.



We can see that some of the components of the human being help us while some are challenges. For example, the *Fitrah* and *Aql* are strong components which direct us to do good. However there is a limit to our intellect and for this Allah sent us the Messengers with the revelations to guide us. Allah's Guidance helps us by telling us what is good and what is bad, in what forms the insinuation of Satan can come in, etc. When we recite the Qur'an with contemplation, we will attain the insight (*basirah*) which will activate the blaming-self and the *nafs ul mutma' inah*.



The Qur'an tells us that we have been created to be tested: (Allah) Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed. [Surah Al-Mulk (67): ayat 2]

Allah tells us what we are being tested on and the scenarios mentioned above describe the nature of the test. This is the mercy of Allah - He equips us with the power, the will, the *fitrah*, the *aql*, the Message/guidance, etc. But He warns us that our will is going to be tested by internal and external challenges. The power and willingness is neutral but it can be influenced/directed to go either way,

good or bad. If we have the insight (*basirah*), if we recite the Quran, if we are close to Allah, if we have the wisdom (*hikmah*), then what will be activated is the sound mind and the *shahawat* (selfdesires) will be controlled and we will not be misled by them. Satan will not come close to us because he knows that if he does so he will not be able to influence us. If we look at it this way, our life is a challenge - it's a real test that we have to go through.



Even with all these components Allah has equipped us with, we still need Tawfiq Allah (guidance from Allah). Without *tawfiq* we might be misled by our desires or by the insinuation of Satan. Thus we need to be closer to Allah. We need to do *du'a* to Allah (calling on Him) all the time and to devote our hearts to Him so that we are constantly seeking His help, His refuge, His Hidayah (guidance). That's why at least 17 times a day we say "Guide us to the Straight Way" - we need Allah's guidance again and again. The guidance is not only to the path but it is also within the path. These are the two types of guidance (*hidayah*) - (i) to the path is becoming a Muslim and (ii) within the path is increasing our S. The Scholars say we need guidance within the path every second of the day - we need Allah's guidance more than we need to breathe.



It is narrated by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, in one Hadith that Allah created a man on an island where he was the only person there. Allah gave the man *rizq* by providing fruits on which he survived. For 70 years the man lived and worshipped only Allah, as there were no challenges there. When the time came for the man to die, Allah commanded the angel to bring his soul to Him. Allah asked the man, "O My servant, to Paradise or to Hellfire?" The man replied, "O Allah, Almighty, to Paradise." Allah said, "O My servant, is it because of My Mercy or is it because of your *amal* (good deeds)?" The man replied, "O Allah, it is because of my *amal*. For 70 years I worshipped you. I have done nothing bad, only good deeds worshipping you." Then Allah commanded his angel to take the bounty of sight and put it on one scale. He then commanded the angel to put the man's 70 years' worth of good deeds on the other scale. The bounty of sight weighed heavier than the deeds of 70 years.

In summary, if for 70 years we were to worship Allah and do good deeds and refrain from bad deeds, we will still not be able to repay Allah for one of His bounties. The Scholars say if you want to know Allah's bounty on you, close your eyes. If we close our eyes and imagine that we can no longer see and try to picture how our life would be, only then can we truly appreciate and value the mercy of Allah.

conclusion

The *hadiths* are the sources of our *iman* (faith), knowledge, and guidance as we are taught by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. Studying and understanding the Hadiths will activate our insight (*basirah*), enlighten our hearts, and uplift our souls. This will by the help of Allah, lead us and keep us on the right path to the end, *insha Allah*.

5. Ibadah & Bida'ah (Innovation)

عَنْ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أُمِّ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا
قَالَتْ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ أَحْدَثَ
فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ
وَمُسْلِمٌ. وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ لِمُسْلِمٍ مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ
أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ.

It is narrated on the authority of the Mother of the Believers, Umm 'Abdullah 'Aishah, *radiyallahu 'anha*, that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"Whosoever introduces into this affair of ours (i.e. into Islam) something that does not belong to it, it is to be rejected."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

According to the version in Muslim, (it reads): "Whosoever works a work which has for it no command of ours is to be rejected."

background

Like Hadith 1, this *hadith* is one of the most important *hadiths*. Imam Nawawi said it should be memorised by every Muslim.



This *hadith* is used as a criterion for judging external actions or performance of Ibadah. If an action is not done in accordance with the Shariah or the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, it will be rejected and not accepted by Allah based on text of this *hadith*. This *hadith* complements Hadith 1, which was a criterion for judging the intentions or the internal actions of the heart. The Scholars say that the acceptance of actions of Ibadah is based on the above two conditions:

- i. The intention - the action should be done with sincerity, for the sake of only Allah.
- ii. It should be done in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Apart from Hadith 1 and Hadith 5, the acceptance of actions can also be found in Surah Al-Kahf (18): ayat 110:

Whoever looks forward to meeting his Sustainer (on Day of Judgement), let him do righteous deeds, and let him not ascribe unto anyone or anything a share in the worship due to his Sustainer.

Emulating and following the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is a Qur'anic obligation. Allah, the Almighty says:

Verily, in the apostle of God you have the best example to emulate for everyone who looks forward (with hope and awe) to Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah unceasingly. [Surah Al-Ahzab (33): ayat 21].

Say (O Prophet): "If you love Allah, follow me, (and) Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.

lessons

This *hadith* is related to a very important concept which is following the Sunnah and violating this concept will lead to *bida'ah* [which will be discussed in detail, insha Allah, in Hadith 28].

Scholars classify actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, into actions done for the purpose of Ibadah (worshiping Allah) and actions which are not done for that purpose (i.e. customs, actions done haphazardly, etc.). There are clear indicators for actions done for the purpose of Ibadah such as commands to do or not to do something, warnings for not doing something, etc.

Muslims are only obliged to follow the first kind of Sunnah.



Looking at it in a positive way, the actions (i.e. forms of *ibadah*) that we do should be done in accordance with the Shariah or the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and to ensure this there is a criterion consisting of five aspects that will keep our actions in check:

i. **Time**

Any *ibadah* that we do has to be done in its designated or specified time. E.g. There are fixed times in the day for the five prayers. For fasting, the month for fasting is Ramadhan. The period that we can fast is from *fajr* to sunset. Similarly, there is a specific time in the year when we can perform the Hajj - from the 8 to the 12 Zulhijjah.

ii. **Place**

The Shariah has specified that certain *ibadahs* have to be performed in designated places. E.g. The places for performing the Hajj, I'tikaf, doing Ihram for Hajj have been fixed by the Shariah and this is something which is sometimes violated by Muslims, e.g. doing the Ihram (starting *talbiyyah* and *niyyah* for Hajj) in Jeddah is incorrect.

iii. **Quantity**

For most of the *ibadahs* the Shariah has specified a certain number of times that the *ibadahs* or their components need to be performed. E.g. For prayers, there are specified number of *rakaahs* and *sujud* and for Tawaf there is a fixed number of rounds (7), etc. We should not violate these rules intentionally. To violate intentionally may make the *ibadah* subject to be rejected.

iv. **Way**

Every *ibadah* was described or shown to us by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - being our best model to follow and emulate. The way that the *ibadahs* are performed by him have to be followed - it should not be violated. E.g. There are different ways of performing different prayers - Salat ul-Janazah has no *ruku'* or *sujud*. Even the size of the stones used for throwing at the Jamrat has been specified by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, as not to be too big.

Before we perform any *ibadah*, we should know and learn the way the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, performed it and we should do it in the right way as he did it. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Pray as you have seen me praying." Many Muslims today violate the way *ibadahs* are performed, because of ignorance or because they do not bother to learn, and they end up doing the *ibadah* in the wrong way.

v. **Type**

If the Shariah has specified a type of *ibadah*, then we should stick to that type. E.g. Al-Udhiah (sacrifice) - the type of animal to be sacrificed has been specified by the Shariah and this should not be violated. Recently a Sheikh in one of the Muslim countries made a *fatwa* that Muslims can use chicken as sacrifice - this is a violation of the type. If a Muslim cannot afford to offer a sacrifice, then they don't have to do it as it is not a *wajib* (i.e. an obligation). In certain years, some of the Sahabahs (companions) purposely did not perform the sacrifice so that the people did not think that it was a *wajib*.



A clear distinction should be made about the actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - whether they were done only from time to time or whether they were done continuously on a regular basis. For example, some of the *nawafil* are things which he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would do from time to time. We should observe this. E.g. Certain Surahs being recited on certain days - it is narrated that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would sometimes recite Surah As-Sajdah (32) and Surah Al-Insan (76) on Fridays. But some Muslims would recite these two Surahs every Friday. We should be aware of this because if we do something regularly people will think that it is *wajib* even though it is not.

If the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, did something only from time to time, then we too should do it from time to time, especially when we do it in congregation.



As it has been mentioned above, the actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, were done for different purposes. There were actions which he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would do haphazardly. There are things he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would do because of the custom of that time. These actions were not done by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, for the purpose of *ibadah*. We too should not do these actions for *ibadah* - our intentions should match the intentions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. The following are some examples:

- At the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, the men used to have long hair - it was not done for the purpose of *ibadah*. So if anyone wants to keep long hair today, it should not be done for *ibadah*.
- The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to open the top buttons of his shirt - this was because it was hot and not because for the purpose of *ibadah*.
- The turban, at the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was worn because it was the custom then.
- Some *hadiths* mention the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, using a stick. Again this was not done for the purpose of *ibadah*.

We should not follow these examples of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, for the purpose of *ibadah*.

How do we differentiate between the actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, which were done for the purpose of *ibadah* and those which were not? The Scholars say if the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, commanded us to do an action or commanded us not to do something, then this is considered an *ibadah*. Or if the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentioned that the doer will receive certain rewards if an action is done, then it is an *ibadah*. Or if the failure for doing a certain action would result in punishment, then the action is an *ibadah*.



This issue of introducing something which doesn't belong to the Shariah is associated with the concept that Islam is a complete religion [Surah Al-Ma'idah (5): ayat 3]:

Today have I perfected your religion for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that Islam shall be your Religion.

Since it is complete, there is no need for additions or deletions to the religion. Therefore to introduce some new matter into Islam or to delete/omit something from it is an affront to Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.



Al-Imam al-Shatibi mentions that if certain actions are taken as *ibadah* where in reality they are not, this will lead to *bid'ah*. There is a *hadith* which tells the story of three men who only wanted to do 'good deeds' all the time - one said he will not get married, the second one said he will pray all night and not sleep, and the third said he will fast every day. When the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, heard this, he said that he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was the most pious and righteous amongst the people and yet he did not do the things the way the men wanted to do them. This shows that the actions that the three men thought were *ibadah* would have resulted in *bid'ah* as they weren't practiced by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.



Al-Shatibi also mentions that avoiding eating certain types of food for the purpose of *ibadah* should not be done. We can avoid these foods for health or other good reasons but not for the purpose of *ibadah*.



He also says that if there are two ways of fulfilling an obligation, we should follow the easier way. E.g. If the weather is cold and if we have the choice of using warm or cold water (for *wudu*), we should use warm water. We shouldn't use cold water and inflict discomfort on ourselves, trying to show that we are stronger Muslims and hoping for extra rewards. Or if there is choice of going to two *masjids* (mosques) of different distances, we should go to the nearer one.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was passing through a place when he noticed someone standing in the middle of the street in the sun. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, asked the Sahabahs what this man was doing. They said that he made a commitment to fast while standing in the sun. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, told them to tell the man to continue his fasting (because this was a good thing to do anyway and fulfilling a commitment is an obligation) but to get out of the sun.

Scholars deduce that we should not attach any hardship to our *ibadah* hoping that it will make it more rewardable. Shariah is based on ease. Therefore we should always choose the easier way when performing an *ibadah* because this will enable us to do it properly - if we were to choose the difficult route then we may, after a while, find difficulty in keeping to our commitment in performing this *ibadah*. An attached hardship to an *ibadah*, which has not been specified by the Shariah, should be avoided - we should not place any hardship in performing any *ibadah*.



The Scholars say if someone violates the Shariah by adding something new to an *ibadah*, the *ibadah* is rejected depending on what kind of violation has been done. For example, in prayer if someone violates its conditions, then his *ibadah* will definitely not be accepted.

If an action is any kind of *bid'ah*, then it is subject to being rejected and the person who performed that action will be asked about it and might be subject to be punished. But if there is a valid excuse for doing that action, the action will not be rewarded but the person may be excused and not punished by Allah.

In worldly dealings and transactions (e.g. Al-Mu'amalat), if someone changes/modifies the principles of the dealings and this violates the Shariah law, then that dealing or transaction is rejected. E.g. changing trading based on *haram* principles, etc.



Ibnu Rajab mentions that there are certain actions, which violate the Shariah, but the Scholars have differing views about them. For example, if a man wears natural silk while performing his prayer, is his prayer acceptable? Or if someone prays in a house which is stolen, taken by force from the owner. Most Scholars say the action is acceptable but the person will be asked about his wrongdoing (wearing silk, praying in a stolen place).

conclusion

These *hadiths* selected by al-Imam al-Nawawi are more of principles and criteria that help the Muslim practice easily and fulfil his/her daily religious obligations.

Hadith 5 sets a criterion for the Muslim by which he can assess and evaluate his actions to ensure their rightness and acceptability.

6. Purification of the heart

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا
قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ : إِنَّ
الْحَلَالَ بَيْنَ وَبَيْنَ الْحَرَامِ بَيْنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ
لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ فَقَدْ
اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي
الْحَرَامِ كَالرَّاعِي يَرَعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ
أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمَى أَلَا وَإِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ مُحَارِمُهُ أَلَا وَإِنَّ
فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا
فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ - رَوَاهُ
الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ .

On the authority of Abu 'Abdullah al-Nu'man bin Bashir, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

"Truly, what is lawful is evident, and what is unlawful is evident, and in between the two are matters which are doubtful which many people do not know. He who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless, and he who indulges in doubtful things indulges in fact in unlawful things, just as a shepherd who pastures his flock round a preserve will soon pasture them in it. Beware, every king has a preserve, and the things Allah has declared unlawful are His preserves. Beware, in the body there is a flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, and behold, it is the heart."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

background

The first thing to note is that Imam al-Bukhari recorded this *hadith* in the beginning of the Book of Trading (Kitab al-Buyu'), i.e. the *kitab* started off with this *hadith*. Some scholars say that Imam al-Bukhari was not only a *muhadith* who memorized, collected, recorded and compiled the *hadith*, but he was also a *faqih* (jurist) and his *fiqh* (jurisprudence) can be noted in so many ways. One is the *tabwib*, or the way that he gave the title for each chapter of his book. He would choose a certain statement which he would then use for the title of the chapter. This title reflects his *fiqh*. Also the way the *hadith* is recorded, where it is placed, under which chapter, and the fact that sometimes a *hadith* is repeated in many chapters - all these reflect the *fiqh* of Imam al-Bukhari.

But why did Imam al-Bukhari start Kitab al-Buyu' with this *hadith*? What does this imply? There are many implications. One of them is that these doubtful matters are related to the things that we buy and sell, that we trade in. It is also said that his father once mentioned to him that for forty years he never brought anything doubtful into their home.

It can be observed that Imam al-Bukhari was influenced by his father's attitude in two ways:

- i. His father brought only *halal* things into the house. Whatever the family ate, drank, wore or used was *halal*. There were no doubts. This is the environment Imam al-Bukhari was brought and raised up in. It is also said that whenever his father made *du'a* to Allah *subhanallahu ta'ala*, Allah answered his *du'a* because of the fact that he never dealt with anything which was doubtful. This is reflected in the behaviour and attitude of Imam al-Bukhari. Hence like in this *hadith* where he chose to record it at the beginning of the chapter Kitab al-Buyu'.
- ii. Imam al-Bukhari is also known as a great *muhadith*. One of the things that a *muhadith* is involved in is al-Jarh wat-Ta`dil, the status of narrators of *hadith* - whether they can be taken as *saadiq*, the one who is truthful and trustworthy, or as those who lie and cannot be taken as true narrators of *hadith*. The *muhadithun* uses specific terms to indicate the status of a narrator. When it comes to the status of the liars, or those who cannot be relied on, Imam al-Bukhari used a very astonishing style of al-Jarh wat-Ta`dil. He would not use direct terms - rather, he would use indirect ones. This also reflects his piety and righteousness. He would not simply label a narrator a liar. Instead he would say: "He has been labelled a liar".

Another matter which is related to Imam al-Bukhari is that whenever there was controversial issues or the clashing of views, he would follow the cautious approach. For example, whenever there was conflicting opinions whether something is an obligation or not, such as the recitation of Al-Fatihah in prayers, he would be in favour of the view that treats it as an obligation. Another school of thought has a different approach where some scholars follow whatever the evidence leads them to - provided it is sound and authentic.

Lessons

The Scholars are of the view that the vast majority of acts fall into one of the first two categories: either it is evidently lawful or unlawful. Only a minority number of acts fall into the third category, that which is doubtful.



It can be noted here that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is using a metaphor, or analogy, twice in this *hadith*. As mentioned before, using metaphors or analogies in communicating ideas is very effective and powerful. From the metaphor and the way it is worded ("just as a shepherd who pastures his flock round a preserve will soon pasture them in it"), we can say that the doubtful things are closer to the unlawful things.



This *hadith* emphasizes the importance of glorifying Allah *subhanallahu ta'ala*. If we want to glorify Allah, we have to glorify His injunctions, commandments, whether they are obligations (so we perform them), or whether they are prohibitions (so we don't perform them). A Salaf once narrated: "Don't look at how minor the sin is that you committed, but look at the glory of the One you disobeyed, i.e. Allah *subhanallahu ta'ala*." A sin, even if it is a minor one, means disobedience to Allah, hence defying the Glorification of Allah. And the glorification of Allah is actually one of the principles of Tawhid.

We mentioned before that the great actions or the principles of Tawhid are done by the heart. That is why the heart is mentioned at the end of this *hadith*. Looking at the *hadith* at first glance, we might have asked what the heart has to do with the rest of the *hadith*. It is in the heart that we glorify Allah. It is the action of heart when we refrain from the unlawful. If the heart is strong, sound, has no

weaknesses, and is full of *iman* (faith), then this would lead us to refrain ourselves from *muharramat* and *makruhah* (undesirable acts). Therefore only those with a strong and sound heart, i.e. the heart that is full of love for Allah, fear of Allah and glorification of Allah, will refrain from the doubtful matters. But those whose hearts are diseased and whose *iman* is weak, may go around the doubtful matters. Little by little they will indulge in the *makruhah*, delaying things and eventually getting into the *muharramat* or delaying or even negating the *wajib*. It has to do with the status of the heart. That is why the scholars talk about the life of the heart. For example, when you see Muslims praying in the *masjid* (mosque), you see hundreds of people praying together. But what distinguishes them is the status of their hearts, whether it is devoted to Allah or not. How strong and pure is the heart? How sound is the heart? That's where people differ. This is what we should concern ourselves with, and compete - taking care of our hearts, purifying them, taking away any diseases from our hearts, to activate *iman* in the heart in order to make it alive.



The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentioned about Abu Bakr as-Sidiq where he said that If you put the *iman* of all the Muslim *ummah* on one scale and the *iman* of Abu Bakr as-Sidiq on the other scale, the *iman* of Abu Bakr as-Sidiq would outweigh the *iman* of the whole *ummah*. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, also said that there is something in the heart of Abu Bakr as-Sidiq that distinguished it from others, and as it is known he was called as-Sidiq. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, once said about Abu Bakr: "When I call someone to Islam, he will have some hesitation...except Abu Bakr as-Sidiq. The minute I talked to him about Islam, straight away he believed in me, he believed in Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah." So it has to do with the heart that distinguished Abu Bakr as-Sidiq to be al-Khalifatul-Awal, and to be the first Sahabi (Companion). From this, it can be said that every Muslim should care about his/her heart, purify it and activate *iman* in the heart, and practise the great principles of Tawhid, such as to love Allah, to fear Him, to rely on Him, to have hope in Him, to seek help fro Him and to seek refuge in Him so that the heart is alive, activated and full of *iman*. And at the same time we have to make sure that there should be no diseases or anything bad within our hearts, e.g. greediness, envy, arrogance, etc. Only then will the heart be sound.



In another related *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentioned that: "The heart will be exposed to *fitan* (trials) again and again. The heart which is influenced by *fitnah* will have a black spot placed on it. And if the heart avoids the *fitnah*, there will be a white spot on it." The heart then is either a pure one, or a heart that has been sealed after being affected by *fitan* or prohibited or doubtful matters again and again. Even though the heart pumps out blood and the person is alive, the heart in reality is not alive, because the *iman* is weak, making the heart unsound. Hence avoiding and getting away from the *fitan* is important in order to have a pure heart, especially in these contemporary times where it is full of evil that attracts the heart.



The evil doers promote evil and impose it on others. So if a Muslim is not careful, his/her heart might be stolen. As mentioned by the great contemporary scholar, Sheikh Abdur Rahman ad-Dusari, there are many thieves today who steal the hearts, sometimes without the owner even being aware of it.

If you read any *hadith* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, it talks about a matter, whether it is something good that we should do, or something bad that we should not do. And then in the *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, will mention a principle. Usually, the principle, which is the main point of the *hadith*, is the last words or sentence. The *hadith* above mentions about the lawful and unlawful being evident, and then there is the doubtful matter. And then there is the last sentence of the *hadith*. This is the bottom-line of the *hadith*, the main thing, the main issue. If we want to get away from the *muharramat* (unlawful), and also from the doubtful matters, we have to care about our heart. We have to purify our heart and make sure it is sound and alive, and it is not lost from us.



One wisdom we can learn from the *hadith* is from the way the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, tells us about something: he will discuss a concept and then give us the principle. This principle helps us not only with the concept mentioned in the *hadith*, but it actually helps us, if we use it in the right way with the right understanding, in other similar matters and situations. If we care about our heart, not only will we be able to avoid the doubtful matters, we can apply the same principle to other similar concepts or issues, e.g. in avoiding bad manners for there are also doubtful matters in the concept of *akhlaq* (values).



It was mentioned earlier that Imam al-Bukhari recorded this *hadith* in *Kitab ul-Buyu'* (Trading). When it comes to trading there are many matters that are doubtful, matters which existed then and even now, e.g. where cheating is done professionally. Therefore we have to be careful if the matter related to trading is clear and evident, permissible or not permissible, or if it is doubtful, in which case we have to avoid it.



Related to the above issue is the issue of *al-ma'kulat* (food) where there are many doubtful matters about what we eat. If we check the ingredients that are used in many manufactured food today, e.g. biscuits, canned food and preserved food, there are ingredients that might raise the question of doubtfulness of what we eat. For example, lecithin is used in the manufacture of foodstuff especially in the west and Muslim countries import a lot of food from the west. If it is not specified otherwise then there is a high probability that the lecithin is derived from *khazir* (pig) because it is cheaper to produce. Otherwise, it should be mentioned whether it is derived from soya or plants or from halal production.

Another ingredient is emulsifier. Emulsifiers are labelled as the letter 'E' followed by a series of numbers. Some emulsifiers contain things that are not permissible. There are efforts done by some Muslim scientists where they try to identify such ingredients. This can then be used as a checklist to check against when we buy food for our family. We should be very careful when we read the ingredients of foodstuff if we want to ensure that what we eat is halal. It is mentioned in a *hadith* that if what we eat is haram, even our *du'a* / supplication is not accepted by Allah.

We should take care of our health. A lot of what we eat today or what is in the market is not fresh. There are so many preservatives, colouring and chemicals which, if used excessively, might affect our health. We have to be careful in the sense that although it is in general permissible, if it is used excessively it will affect our health - then we are not doing good for our health as a Muslim.



Some of the interpreters of the collection of the Forty Hadiths try to identify or pinpoint some matters that are doubtful in general. Sometimes they mention matters or controversial issues where the related evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah are conflicting and there is no apparent way to resolve the conflict. They mention general matters where views of scholars may also be conflicting. Some permissible matters might lead a person to do what is forbidden or lead him to fail to do what is obligatory. For example, the issue of staying up late. According to the view of some scholars, it is *makrooh* to stay up late for no valid reason, just chatting or doing nothing or just wasting time. Even though in general it is permissible, this might lead to other consequences where it might cause the delaying or failing to do the *wajib* or it might lead us into doing *muharram*. The scholars also say that there are matters which were inferred or concluded based on certain *hadiths* where the authenticity of the *hadith* is questionable. They say this can also be treated as doubtful matters.

The main key to the issue that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, gave us, again, is the heart. If we care about our heart, we will be more sensible. If the heart is sound, strong, full of *iman* (faith), we will be more responsible, and we will care more about what we do and what we don't do. This becomes the measure to those matters which are doubtful.

Even though some interpreters gave some principles by which we can distinguish those doubtful matters, it can still be debated or questioned. But if the heart is good, strong and full of *iman*, the

person will be able to distinguish between the doubtful matters and other clear evident matters, where he would also be able to refrain from the doubtful matters. Sometimes people may know something is *haram* and not just doubtful, but yet they still get involved in it because of the weak status of their hearts.



So here again we would like to emphasize the main key to dealing with the problem of doubtful matters is the heart. If we all care about the heart, make sure it is in a good status, then insha-Allah we will be able to be saved by the help of Allah. We will be guided by Allah, because the heart will be full of light. When we say the heart is full of light or guided by light, there are things that we can do that help us to identify and avoid doubtful matters:

- Al-Muhasabah - self accountability
- Al-Muraqabah - self reckoning
- Dzikrullah - the remembrance of Allah. Imam Nawawi himself compiled another book, the Book of Azkar, where he recorded the *hadith* about *azkar*. It is mentioned by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, that remembering Allah will purify the heart. However, we have to do it regularly and on a continuous basis. We should do the *azkar* after prayers.

Another thing is as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi (the sending of prayers and blessings to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*). This is also an important matter. We don't train ourselves to practice this Salatu 'ala an-Nabi, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. We just write SAW or an alphabet after mentioning the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. We even abbreviate the phrase "*subhanahu wata'ala*". These are mistakes because *du'a* cannot be abbreviated. This is commonsense. Why do we abbreviate? Is it to save our time? Or to save ink? We have to practice saying/writing "*sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*" in full because we are encouraged to do so. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Do you know the greedy? The one whom my name is mentioned in front of him or her, and he does not say "*sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*".

In another *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that if we practice as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi, Allah will send His "prayers" and blessings upon us (*yusalli 'alaih*). What does this mean? The scholars explain this by saying that Allah will guide the person who practices as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi and gives him the light by which to distinguish between the good and the bad. It is a light that will be in the heart. This is termed as *as-solatu minallah 'ala al-'abd*. Moreover each time we say "*sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*" we will be rewarded ten times. Hence we should strive to not lose out on obtaining all these good things. We should love the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, more than ourselves, our families, our parents or our children.

Conclusion

There are doubtful matters that a Muslim might face in his/her everyday dealings and activities. This *hadith* helps the Muslim in dealing with such matters. There is an early ongoing preparation which is needed in such a case - to purify one's heart. There are some actions that can help us achieve this task, like: *hayya'* (modesty), *murakabah* (self reckoning), *muhasabah* (self accountability), *dzikr* (remembrance of Allah), and as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. These are things that, insha Allah, can help us and enlighten and purify our heart, and also help us to identify and avoid the doubtful matters - this is the main point, the key, the principle of the *hadith*.

"Beware; in the body there is a flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, and behold, it is the heart."

7. Nasihah

عَنْ أَبِي رُقَيْةَ تَمِيمِ بْنِ أَوْسِ الدَّارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ
أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ قُلْنَا
لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأَيِّمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَعَامَّتِهِمْ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Tamim Al-Dari that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"Religion is *nasihah*." We said: "To whom?" The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "To Allah and His Book, and His messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk."

[Muslim]

Background

The word "*nasihah*" cannot be accurately translated to English because it is a broad concept which cannot be traced in the English language. Some use the term "sincerity" but this is only part of the concept - to negate deception/cheating. According to Imam Ibnu al-Salah, *nasihah* is "truly seeking the best, in terms of intention and action, for the one whom he is making *nasihah* to".



This *hadith* is a profound statement as Sheikh Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo says that in this one brief statement the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, described the essence of Islam. *Nasihah* hence forms the bulk and the most important pillar of Islam since it encompasses Islam, Iman and Ihsan.

Lessons

Nasihah to Allah

The *nasihah* should be to Allah first. This includes the fulfillment of the obligations in the best way possible (Ihsan). This should be the goal for every Muslim. This also includes striving to get as close to Allah as possible by doing not only the obligations but also the preferable good deeds, by forbidding the forbidden and avoiding the disliked acts.

Nasihah to Allah also involves:

- believing in Allah and denying any partners with Him.
- believing in His attributes.
- obeying Him.
- fulfilling His commands and abstaining from what He has forbidden.

- doing what is best to remember Him, under all circumstances.
- loving whatever He loves and hating whatever He hates, be it objects, persons, actions, sayings, etc.
- recognising the blessings He has bestowed upon us and properly thanking Him for these blessings.

To do *nasihah* to Allah one should have the correct intention in one's heart to fulfill the rights of Allah, even when one is excused and it is beyond one's ability to perform these obligations. Sometimes a person may not be able to perform an obligation but at least he has good intentions in his heart to fulfill it in the first place.

The actions of the heart (i.e. to have hope in Allah's mercy, to trust Him, to fear Him and to seek refuge in Him), and the actions of the limbs (prayers, Zakah, etc.) also fall under *nasihah* to Allah.

Honesty is also another aspect of this great concept. In whatever we do we should always be honest with Allah, similarly with *ikhlas* (sincerity). In fact *ikhlas* should be the first thing that a Muslim should attain when we talk about *nasihah* to Allah.



Nasihah to His Book

This includes:-

- Believing that the Qur'an is from Allah, that it is the Word of Allah and that it is not like the word of man.
- According to one's ability, to read and recite the Qur'an and to practice it.
- To study its admonitions, lessons and parables.
- Calling others to believe in the Qur'an.
- To defend and protect it from any kind of distortion or misinterpretation.
- Defending the Qur'an against false claims made against it.
- Having proper respect and treating the Qur'an in a proper manner - e.g. to be careful not to throw away a piece of paper which has an *ayat* printed on it (magazine article, etc.) as it may be stepped on - we should also be aware if we see such a piece of paper on the ground to pick it up and keep it away safely or destroy it by burning it so that it is not subject to disrespect.



Nasihah to His Messenger

This includes:-

- Believing the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, message.
- Believing in all that he brought as being divinely inspired.
- Loving him more than we love ourselves and our families - it is the second level of love after the love of Allah.
- Our love for him should lead to other obligations like obeying him.
- Helping him and defending him (for those who were alive during his time) - defending his honour and respecting his status.
- For the people who came after the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, life, we should respect and love his Sunnah which is an implication of loving him.
- To say "*sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*" whenever his name is mentioned.
- To accept his Sunnah as a scale by which we judge things, actions and sayings.
- To accept him as the true leader and only human's final word with respect to the religion - he is the only true human authority and everyone else's statements/opinions come after his.
- To love those who love him and hate those who hate him.

- Reviving his Sunnah by learning, understanding, teaching and spreading it. However, when we call people to the Sunnah - as advised by Imam Ahmad - we should do it in a nice and proper way and not to end up fighting about it. One problem today is that many Muslims are unaware of the Sunnah and the status of the Sunnah - so one of the things we should do is to make these people love the Sunnah, and we should not do so in an aggressive or confrontational way as this might lead to the people being confused, offensive and rejecting the Sunnah.

There are so many *bid'ah* being practiced today and the way to remove *bid'ah* amongst the people is to revive the Sunnah (The Salaf said: "Bid'ah only arises when the Sunnah is not known or practiced."). To revive the Sunnah, we should not start with the condemnation of *bid'ah* but rather with the introduction/presentation of the Sunnah. We have to set good role models of those who love, and follow the Sunnah and we should teach others in a nice, proper way so that others too can understand, love and appreciate the Sunnah. Then they will use the Sunnah as a scale to judge things. Slowly, insha Allah, *bid'ah* will be reduced and minimized.

When we try to educate people about the Sunnah, we should be careful not to confuse them by focussing on minor issues. Sunnah can be broken into different levels and we should start from the highest level. We should not teach people about the lower levels (details) when they haven't been taught the higher levels (basic concepts). We should let the people understand and love the higher level Sunnah first before we go step by step into the lower levels, slowly covering more details. This, insha Allah, will lead to the revival of the Sunnah.

- To love both his family and his companions. Most Islamic sects love one or the other and not both. There are some deviated Islamic sects who are propagating their false beliefs by creating doubts about the Sahabah (Companions) with the intention of making people hate them. This will lead to the rejection of the Sunnah. Some sects only believe the Sunnah that comes through their imams, e.g. the Shi'ah. We should be aware of the sources of narrations about the Sahabah as some of these narrations are false and may create doubts.
- To love those who follow, defend and strive to revive the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.



Nasihah to the Muslim Leaders

The word 'leader' stands for both '*ulama* and those in authority (at all levels). *Nasihah* should be given to all leaders, no matter how high or what the ranking is. No one is above the law in Islam and no one is above needing advice. *Nasihah* is for the benefit of anyone who is in authority. This means that a ruler, leader or scholar should be the first to accept sincere advice.

Making *nasihah* to Muslim leaders should include:-

- Helping them in whatever is good or beneficial.
- Obeying them in what is right.
- Reminding them if they should err or forget.
- Being patient with them if they do things which we dislike - we try to do the *nasihah* and at the same time we tolerate the leader because otherwise it may lead to instability in the Muslim community.
- Making *jihad* with them and not revolting against their proper authority.
- One should pray for their guidance and piety.
- Choosing the right way, manner and channel in advising them. The Scholars say giving *nasihah* to leaders should be done according to certain rules:
 - i. One must have good intentions (*ikhlas*).
 - ii. It should be done mildly, calling on them with respect.
 - iii. Avoiding harshness and not to embarrass them - our aim is to advise and correct them and not to show off.

- iv. Not to divulge or inform others about their wrong-doings as this may lead to more problems in the society.
 - v. Give the *nasihah* privately and not publicly.
- If one is asked by the leader to do a *maksiah* or something which contradicts with Shariah, one shouldn't obey. However, we should disobey in a nice/assertive manner and not in an aggressive way because our aim is to remind them that this is wrong so that they will change and not ask us to do the *maksiah*.
 - For the Scholars, our *nasihah* is seeking knowledge from them.
 - We obey them if their opinion is based on sound proof and evidence.
 - Not to seek or point out their mistakes. There are some people who search for the mistakes of Scholars - we shouldn't do this because Scholars are pious people and this act may cause Allah to be displeased with us. It may also create chaos in the community.
 - Not to follow them blindly.
 - Not to hallow them.



Nasihah to the Common Folk of the Muslims

This includes:-

- To observe the rights of other Muslims - fulfilling our obligations towards other Muslims. These obligations differ depending on the group of Muslims (e.g. our parents, children, relatives, neighbours, etc.) - e.g. greeting them, visiting them when they are sick, making *du'a* for them, giving advice if they ask for it, praying *solat ul janazah* for the one who dies, etc.
- To observe the concept of *wala'* which means:
 - i. to love every Muslim.
 - ii. to care for all Muslims.
 - iii. to help other Muslims.
 - iv. to defend/protect other Muslims .

If you do not love, you will not care. If you do not care, you will not help. If you do not help, you will not protect. The reason why so many Muslims today do not care or help others is because there is something wrong with the *wala'* aspect of love. We should have love for other Muslims, especially those who are suffering, so we will care and help them. The Scholars say one way to help and the least we can do is to make *du'a* (pray for them).

There is a counter concept to *al-wala'* which is *al-bara'* or disassociation with (for the purpose of leading others from doing evil). However we should not do it:

- v. for our own interest.
- vi. if it will not lead the other person to change his ways - we should not start with disassociation, we should start with giving advice and educating.

We should show love and concern and give *nasihah* in the proper way. If all else fails, then we can use the concept of disassociation (if it will lead to the person changing).

- The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that "he is a real Muslim if he is the one who the other Muslims are saved from his tongue and his hand" - the true Muslim is one who will not harm others verbally or physically, in any way or by any means.
- Having mercy for the young and showing respect to the elders - it is part of glorifying Allah that we respect the elder Muslims.
- Sacrificing one's time, effort, money, etc. for the betterment of the Muslim community.
- If we are the ones in authority, then we should act sincerely towards the rest of the Muslims and do whatever is in their best interest. We should give *nasihah* to the people by, e.g. doing

what is best for the ummah, defending the community, putting the right and qualified people in the right position and job. Any kind of leadership or authority, whatever the level or rank, is responsible for the people being lead - e.g. supervisors, managers, teachers, principles, etc.

conclusion

From exploring all the obligations mentioned above, we can see that *nasihah* encompasses everything in Islam, Iman and Ihsan.

8. The concept of Jihad

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ. فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى -
رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ .

Abdullah bin Omar narrated that the messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"I have been ordered to fight against people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and until they perform the prayers and pay the zakat, and if they do so they will have gained protection from me for their lives and property, unless [they do acts that are punishable] in accordance with Islam, and their reckoning will be with Allah the Almighty."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

background

The majority of Scholars say that the "people" here refers to the Arab polytheists. The same interpretation can also be found in the Qur'an in Surah An-Nasr.

Another opinion say that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was referring to all people, excluding Ahlul Kitab, i.e. the people of the Book. It was said that this *hadith* was abrogated by the later rulings concerning *jizziya* (compensation).

A third opinion interprets the *hadith* as saying that people have to accept the domination or supremacy of Islam - that Islam is the dominant religion. This objective is to be achieved by whatever means, whether it is through fighting or through peaceful agreements.

lessons

Islam is the only true religion. It is the truth; it is the path of Allah. One of the divine Laws since the earth was created: evil has always been fighting against truth. The truth has to be protected and it needs power to protect it. This is the main philosophy of *jihad* in Islam: *Jihad* is to establish and maintain justice and truth.

Jihad is not confined to only fighting. It has many other unpracticed or weakly practiced forms: *da'wah*, disseminating knowledge and educating others, maximizing the good and minimizing the evil, reconciling clashes and conflicts between Muslims, striving for the betterment of community are all forms of *jihad*.

How do we deal with the concept of *jihad* in our contemporary life? There are oppressed Muslim communities where fighting is a choice. However, generally speaking, we can answer the question based on dealing with two kinds of challenges: internal and external ones.



Internal Challenges encountering Muslims

Today unfortunately, the Muslim *ummah* is not united. It is divided and split into different groups and sects whether religious or political. Conflicts are every where between Muslims. In this situation *jihad* means to re-establish the unity of the Muslim communities and of the *ummah* at large. It means also to remove or minimize clashes and disputes.



Another issue is the lack of understanding of Islam by the Muslims themselves. The majority of Muslims today do not understand the true meaning of Islam, even the basic concepts. Here, *jihad* takes the form of disseminating the true message of Islam to the Muslims and educating them so that they fully understand their *deen*.

Since the majority of the Muslims do not truly understand Islam, they do not practice their religion correctly or completely. This means the *shahadah* of the *ummah* (i.e. being witnesses of the truth) is not activated today. We should be establishing ourselves as a role model to other nations but we are not doing so. We should be practicing the great values, concepts and principles of Islam and following its rulings and guidelines. If we do so, this will portray the real image of Islam and make us the perfect model for other societies, communities and nations. Only then will the non-Muslims feel attracted to Islam and may accept the dominance of Islam in their society because they see that the dominance of Islam means justice, good values, well-being of human kind, etc.

This is a great *jihad* which we should undertake though it needs great effort and may take a very long time, i.e. decades, to establish. We should embark on this *jihad* step by step, with different efforts happening concurrently: efforts to educate the Muslims their great religion; efforts to make them practice it and be good role models to others; efforts to make Muslims a great nation, and to make them united.



Looking at the Muslim *ummah* or community today, the basic concept which will lead to unity is missing - the concept of Al-Wala'. Al-Wala' contains 4 sub-concepts: love, care, help and protection. These basic concepts are missing from the Muslim *ummah* and therefore we need to revive these concepts in order to unite the *ummah*.



This is the situation of the Muslims today. How can we talk about the supremacy and the dominance of Islam if the Muslims are in such a weak situation where there are so many discrepancies, contradictions, obstacles, shortcomings, etc. These are areas where great efforts and a great *jihad* are needed.

But to do *jihad* in a forceful way, i.e. by fighting, does not work and may create even more problems. There are some groups of Muslims today who confine *jihad* to fighting as the main and only way to establish the previous mentioned goals and this is destroying the image of Islam and is not doing any favour to the Muslims. Those people interpret this *hadith* to mean fighting but this may not be applicable to the situation of the Muslims today where fighting may cause more and greater harm.



External challenges encountering Muslims

The Muslim community is encountering two kinds of challenges - the internal challenges (some of which were previously mentioned) and the external challenges which are being imposed on them by the opponents of Islam. Those opponents are coming up with different ways of 'fighting' and trying to rule the Muslim world. These external challenges include all aspects of globalisation, modernity, change of lifestyle, technology misuse, changing values, etc. The battle field of these challenges are the minds and attitudes of Muslims specially the young generation, where the focus is on influencing the attitudes of the Muslims through influencing their way of thinking and altering their perceptions.

The opponents of Islam are promoting evil and negative concepts through new ways and means. One of them is changing our perception about things, where wrong-doings and evil deeds are being perceived as acceptable or even preferable. The latest findings of researches and studies, like cognitive psychology, are used to influence the world, including the Muslims, to change their attitudes, values and even beliefs.

If we accept the situation as it is and not do anything about it, the negative consequences will be greater in the future. Today everything, including the future, is being preplanned and designed but the Muslims are not aware of this. We are not aware that we are the subjects of the schemes of others - that we are being used or victimised as target groups where the Muslim minds are being manipulated and brainwashed. Therefore we need to counter these external challenges. This is also a great *jihad* because these opponents of Islam are using such means and ways to threaten our values, beliefs and identities as Muslims. We need to be aware of the situation and think about what is being designed to influence us and we should use the same means to counter these negative influences.



The influencing method used by the opponents is similar to the insinuation of the Shaitan. This insinuation, as stated in the Qur'an, is done by the Shaitan to colour our perception. As Allah says, Shaitan will either promote evil by colouring our perception so that bad things are being perceived as good, or by influencing us and preventing us from doing good deeds. For example, if we want to give *sadakah*, Shaitan will insinuate to us that doing such a good deed will burden our finances and influence us into thinking about what better use we could have for the money if we did not give it away.

It is also mentioned in the Qur'an that Shaitan creates conflicts and disputes among the Muslims, also through colouring their perception. A word or term may have different meanings and different interpretations which in turn will lead to different understandings. For example, if a person uses a double-meaning word, Shaitan comes in and insinuates by causing the other party to misinterpret the meaning and this leads to conflicts and disputes. That's why quarrels occur between husbands and wives, brothers, friends, community members, etc.



This same method of colouring or manipulating our perception is being used today by evil doers to promote evil through many different means such as the media and technology. Whether it is through pictures or spoken or written words, these methods are used to change and alter our perception, influencing our attitudes and values and the way we view the world.

This is one of the real areas of *jihad* today for Muslim educators and intellectuals.

Technology can be used in both a negative and/or positive way. We must master it and be in control of it, using it for our benefit and not to merely be passive users. When we use technology, e.g. the Internet, we must use it in a way where we are the ones who control it, and not as a manipulation tool of others. We should use it in our *da'wah*, as a form of counter manipulation. We use it to alter the perception of our Muslim community back to its original, positive form, whether it is our values, beliefs or attitudes.



We can also use the Qur'anic style of *da'wah*, using metaphors and analogies. This methodology is something which we are very weak at. Metaphorical Thinking and Analytical Thinking are powerful skills which we need to learn. These are actually Qur'anic styles. Even though these styles of thinking appear as products of the West, i.e. the products of Cognitive Psychology which was established about 50 years ago, they were actually established 1,500 years ago by Islam. But the Muslims themselves are not using these tools. Thus, we need to learn these methods and start using them. We need to use imageries and similes in our dialogue when we give *da'wah* as this makes it easier for people to understand the message.



Part of our *jihad* and obligations is to update and equip ourselves with the right tools. Willingness and enthusiasm is not enough. We need to be able to learn and utilise the right tools to counter what is being imposed on us by the evil doers.

conclusion

We need to understand ourselves, to understand Islam, to educate others about Islam, to understand the contemporary challenges, to equip ourselves with the right tools so that we can face and counter the contemporary challenges in the right way. When we talk about the concept of *jihad* we shouldn't just talk about the common understanding of *jihad* - we shouldn't get emotional about it, forgetting about ourselves or the world we're living in or the situation of our *ummah* or about the challenges we are facing. Thus it is not easy to truly understand the different aspects of the concept of *jihad* or how to implement these aspects in our world today.

When we discuss about the concept of *jihad* we have to resolve the conflicts that exist within ourselves - the conflicts between reality and the ideal situation. One of the biggest efforts we have to undertake is to determine how we can bridge the distance between these conflicts. We need to bridge the gap between the ideal situation and the real world.

To resolve these conflicts within us, we need psychological and social adjustments. We live in a society which is somehow corrupted but we still maintain our values and try to do something to improve the situation. Otherwise without these adjustments we may end up with either confrontation and aggressiveness or living a modern life and rejecting our values and beliefs.

Both extremes are not acceptable. What we need is assertiveness, a social and psychological adjustment. We need to determine how we can live in this modern world as a good Muslim, maintaining our identity and moral values. These are great challenges which we face today. We have to be practical in dealing with these challenges. When we talk about Islam we usually talk in the theoretical sense, e.g. what is *taqwa* (piety), *ikhlas* (sincerity), etc. We need to be able to implement these concepts in our everyday life activities and practices especially as we face all these different challenges. Thus we need to address Islamic concepts with reality, within the context of the actual situation of the society today.

9. How are obligations to be fulfilled?

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ صَخْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ
قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ:
مَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ وَمَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ فَاتُوا مِنْهُ
مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَثْرَةُ مَسَائِلِهِمْ
وَإِخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ .

Abu Hurairah 'Abd al-Rahman bin Sakhr, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

“Avoid that which I forbid you to do and do that which I command you to do to the best of your capacity. Verily the people before you were destroyed only because of their excessive questioning and their disagreement with their Prophets.”

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

background

Sabab al-wurud (reasons and background of a *hadith*) is very important to enable us to understand its meaning. This *hadith* can be understood by knowing its background. It was related during an incident where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Allah has commanded you to perform Hajj. So perform Hajj, O servants of Allah." Then a man stood up and said: "O Prophet of Allah, do we have to do it every year?" Then the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "That whatever I forbid you to do, avoid it and whatever I command you to do, do it as much as you can."

lessons

The incident above was at the time of revelation. Asking too many questions about an obligation may lead to complications and confusions. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was not happy with the question raised by the man for it could have caused the Hajj to be performed every year by each Muslim if the answer was yes to that question.

However, asking questions in the right way is encouraged as understood from the first *hadith* in this Forty Hadith collection. In fact, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used questions and answers to educate his Companions. Questions that lead to knowledge and goodness are encouraged. What is prohibited and discouraged are questions that will lead to confusion, doubt and chaos in the community, like asking questions about unnecessary details.

One significant characteristic of Shariah, i.e. Islamic Law, is its flexibility and practicality. One's capacity is regarded and considered in fulfilling obligations. A Muslim is encouraged to do good actions based on his/her ability and capacity.

Hence Hajj is performed when one has the ability and facility to do it. However if one is tied-up with loans or with other clashing obligations, then there is room for delaying it for another time. This is supported by the Qur'anic verse: "...And Hajj to the House (Kaabah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those can afford the expenses..." [Surah Al-Imran (3): ayat 97].



In other actions like prayers, the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, statement "perform as much as you can" can also mean to perform it at the preferred time and mode (in congregation). However due to unavoidable circumstances, they can be performed later within the specified time. Similarly, a person who is not able to stand in prayer may pray while sitting.

Flexibility is also attributed to other obligations like fasting. For example, one may break the fast while traveling or if he is sick and make it up on other days.



The forbidden must be totally avoided by the Muslim to the extent that whatever leads to *haram* (prohibited act) must be avoided as well, even without intention of indulging in it. By refraining from acts that lead to a prohibited act, we are actually safeguarding ourselves from falling into the forbidden.

Another application of the statement "perform as much as you can" is what Imam al-Shatibi said about a Muslim should not attach hardship to any good deed or act even if it is an obligation. If there is an easier option, one should not use the harder option. For example, during cold weather we should use warm water for *wudu'* (ablution), if we have the option. Hardship is not intended by the *shari'ah* and should be avoided. However when there is no other choice, then the reward for the person will be higher.

The same principle applies to *mandubat* (good actions that are not compulsory but encouraged). We should do as much as we can. According to Imam al-Shatibi one shouldn't make any commitment that he/she must do a certain *mandubat* following strictly to a certain schedule but instead he/she should do it with ease at his/her own capacity. For example, don't make it a *wajib* (compulsory) that you will fast every Monday and Thursday but do it as much as you are able to comfortably and break it from time to time. If you try to commit yourself in these matters, they may burden you and you may finally get fed up and abandon them.

On this issue, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "O people, perform such acts as you are capable of doing, for Allah does not grow weary but you will get tired." In another hadith the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "The acts most pleasing to Allah are those which are done continuously, even if they are small." [Recorded by Imam Muslim]



There are some exceptions to the hadith which can be understood from the Qur'an and Sunnah. When the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, forbade the *haram*, the general rule is to avoid them. However there are exceptions like during necessity or when there is a clash between a minor and a major harm. For example, in a situation where it is necessary to eat something which is forbidden or face the risk of losing one's life. In this case, a greater harm is avoided by tolerating a minor harm. This principle is called by the scholars as weighing between benefits and harm.

conclusion

Understanding and practicing these principles may lead us to live a better and practical life, and help us fulfill our obligations in the right way. Applying them will lead us to love, appreciate and continuously practice *Ibadah* (good deeds).

10. Being pure (at-Tayyib)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِمَا أَمَرَ بِهِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ فَقَالَ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُّوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا، وَقَالَ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ. ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ الرَّجُلُ يُطِيلُ السَّفَرَ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ يَمُدُّ يَدَيْهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ: يَا رَبُّ يَا رَبُّ. وَمَطْعَمُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَشْرَبُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَلْبَسُهُ حَرَامٌ وَغُذِيَ بِالْحَرَامِ فَأَنَّى يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

“Verily Allah the Exalted is pure. He does not accept but that which is pure. Allah commands the believers with what He commanded the Messengers. Allah the Almighty has said: "O you Messengers! Eat of the good things and act righteously" [23:51-53]. And Allah the Almighty also said: "O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided you with" [2:167-172].

Then he (the Prophet) mentioned (the case of) the man who, having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty and who stretches out his hands to the sky (saying): "O Lord! O Lord!" (while) his food was unlawful, his drink was unlawful, his clothing was unlawful, and he is nourished with unlawful things, so how can he be answered?"

[Muslim]

background

The word "*at-tayyib*" is used in the Qur'an and Sunnah to describe actions, good deeds, people, things, speech, etc. This term is used as adjectives. Literally it means something good. Ibn Rajab interpreted the word as "*at-tahir*", or pure.

The term "Verily Allah the Exalted is pure" means Allah has all the attributes of perfection and completeness, free from any kind of shortcomings, weaknesses or needs.

As for "He does not accept but that which is pure", the *hadith* refers to all good deeds. Allah does not accept any deeds that are spoilt by any aspects that may ruin it. For example, the deed must be free from showing-off to others and in the case that involves wealth then the wealth must come from legal sources.

Allah commanded the Believers (Mu'minin) in the same manner as He commanded the Messengers:

"O Messengers! Eat of the Tayyibat" [Surah Al-Mu'minun (23): ayat 51]

"O you who believe! Eat of the Tayyibat that We have provided you with, .." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2): ayat 172]

lessons

The verses above and this *hadith* imply the following beneficial and useful rulings:

- The money that the Muslims earn must be pure and legal.
- The food that is consumed must be lawful (*halal*).
- The money with which a person buys food must be lawful, coming from lawful sources.
- These are the keys for acceptance of our deeds by Allah.
- Whether something is permissible or prohibited is by the will of Allah. He explains, guides and tells us what are permissible and what are not. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that some people have wrongfully made something unlawful when actually Allah has made it lawful, and vice versa. It is actually Allah's right to make things lawful and unlawful.
- Earning and consuming lawful things are important conditions for acceptance of our supplications (*du'a*) by Allah.



Adab (manners) of *du'a* mentioned by this *hadith*:

- Earning and consuming lawful things.
- Travelling is one of the occasions when *du'a* is accepted by Allah. Other occasions mentioned by other *hadiths* are as follows: during travelling, sickness, prostration, rainfall and during the last third of the night. These chances need to be observed so as not to be missed by the people going through these occasions.
- Being humble in the *du'a*.
- To raise the hands towards the sky.
- Eagerness in performing the *du'a*, such as asking Allah many times like saying "Ya rabb, ya rabb". *Du'a* is an important form of worship (*ibadah*) that must be eagerly practised by the Muslims. It is a high form of *ibadah* as it shows our need of Allah in helping us. We are in need of Allah's mercy more than we need the air for breathing. We need His help, guidance and mercy in every second and our every single movement.

If these *adab* are not observed, then our *du'a* may not be responded by Allah. If we want Allah to respond to our *du'a*, then we need to respond to his commandments such as eating only that which are lawful to us.



Another ruling from the *hadith* is that charity (*sadaqah*) is only accepted by Allah if it is from lawful sources. This is based on "Allah is pure and only accepts what is pure". Wealth that is obtained from unlawful sources should not be given as *sadaqah* or used in performing any form of worship like performing the Haj. An example is when a person steals money and uses it to perform the Haj. In this context, Ibn Abbas said: "Filth does not expiate filth".



Another ruling given by the scholars is that if somebody stole money, then it must be returned and not be given away as charity. This is particularly applicable in the case of a person wanting to repent (*taubah*) after stealing the money. The person needs to return the money to the owner. If this is not

possible, like if the owner is not known or cannot be found, then according to some scholars it can be used for public benefit like roads.



An explanation of the *hadith* given by Jamaluddin Zarabozo is that this *hadith* alludes to the importance of supporting oneself through permissible means. How one supports oneself is how one lives. If it is through legal means, then it will be blessed by Allah.



Another explanation given by the scholars is about the issue of 'public belongings', like the property of a company, organization or an institution. This is an important issue and must be observed because public belongings that are wrongfully taken are considered *ghalul* (a kind of stealing or taking something illegally), a practice which is expiated even by Jihad in the way of Allah until one pays them back. This is related in a *hadith* about a martyr who took a small portion of the booty of the war.

Today, many Muslims take this issue of *ghalul* for granted. For example, taking paper and pen from the office for personal use. Another example is the personal use of the photocopy machine, company car, telephone, company money or any other instrument without getting the permission from the authority. We will also be held responsible if we damage or vandalise public property/belongings.

A good example of protecting oneself from *ghalul* is one set by Khalifah Umar bin Abdulaziz when he used one candle for his administration duties and put it out upon completion of his duties. He would then use his personal candle.

We need to learn from this example of how we should use things in the way they are allocated for. For example, we need to turn off the lights and the air-conditioner when we leave the office and save the electricity bill of the company/organization. By doing this, we will be rewarded by Allah and Allah will respond to our *du'a*.

We need to create awareness among the Muslims to be more responsible and not to indulge in *ghalul*.



A contemporary issue related to this *hadith* is about caring what we eat, in terms of two things:

- To be aware of the ingredients of the food in the restaurant or packed/canned foods, especially if they are imported. We need to ensure that they are lawful.
- Many of the things that people eat may cause health problems. We need to be more aware about the healthy aspects of the food, that they are 'pure'. Universities may need to introduce health education so that people can know what the good foods are. They need to be aware of preservatives, colouring and chemical used in the food. Harmful contents are not '*tayyiban*' (pure).

conclusion

Scholars mentioned that whatever we eat affects our attitude and behaviour. We need to eat the right food (*at-Tayyib*) and in the right manners (*adab*) as prescribed by Islam - e.g. not to eat excessively. By observing these issues, if Allah wills, it will lead us to be better Muslims with a better level of Iman and purer heart devoting to Allah. Then everything that we do can be described as '*at-tayyib*'. This condition is attained by those who observe the manners, earning, drinking, eating the '*tayyib*' and giving charity from the '*tayyib*'. We will then be the '*tayyibun*', pure and blessed by Allah